Information Services Board Briefing Paper on the Employment Security Department Services, Knowledge and Information Exchange System Project

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Description

The Employment Security Department (ESD) will provide a status update and describe the major lessons learned from the Services, Knowledge and Information Exchange System (SKIES) project.

Background

In 1994, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) established the One-Stop concept and a series of supporting grants for planning and implementing systems. USDOL identified four guiding principles for One-Stop: (1) customer focus; (2) universal access; (3) integrated services; and (4) accountability. Washington State quickly seized upon the One-Stop initiative as a vehicle for focusing its own efforts to unify the delivery of employment and training services. The state applied for and received a $450,000 grant from USDOL in October 1994 to build upon local successes and plan for a statewide One-Stop service delivery system. In 1997, Washington State secured a $9.45 million three-year grant from USDOL to implement a One-Stop system.

In September 1998, the Employment Security Department (ESD), on behalf of all Washington One-Stop stakeholders, engaged Pacific Technologies, Inc. (PTI), an information technology management consulting firm, to produce a feasibility study for a One-Stop Customer Tracking and Accountability System (CTAS). On May 20, 1999, ESD received approval from the Information Services Board (ISB) for the Customer Tracking and Accountability System (CTAS) acquisition plan. ESD was preparing to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for development of a CTAS based on a feasibility study that was completed by a contractor in the fall of 1998. However, as noted in the approved acquisition plan, ESD delayed the release of the RFP pending an analysis of a One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) being developed in Utah. On March 1, 2000, ESD presented the results of the OSOS assessment to the WorkSource Washington Executive Policy Council (EPC). The EPC adopted the two recommendations of the OSOS Implementation Steering Committee that:

1. Utah UWORKS be implemented as the One-Stop Operating System in Washington State; and
2. A four-month implementation budget of $550,000 out of the total technology approved funds (total budgeted amount from One-Stop Implementation funds is $1.9 million) be made available for the OSOS project.

Although the Utah UWORKS transfer system met 70 to 80 percent of the Washington business requirements, it was deficient in two areas: (1) system documentation; and (2) labor exchange. The project implementation start date was delayed seven months (March 2001 to October 2001). This change was the result of a need to develop system documentation and to clarify business requirements, especially those related to the labor exchange functions. To accomplish these activities and provide greater business coordination, the project hired a business lead. To verify the design and functionality, the SKIES project team had to analyze the system functions and develop system documentation. Washington will be the first state to implement an integrated one-stop case management system with labor exchange functionality.

Status

On April 8, 2002, Employment Security implemented SKIES statewide for the WorkSource system. The system is performing well in terms of function and capacity. However, ESD is embarking upon a series of enhancement activities over the next fiscal year to extend the functionality. The foremost task is to modify all of the Oracle forms to make the application totally American Disabilities Act accessible. Another task is to formally decommission the JobNet and Job Training Partnership Act (ADA) legacy systems that SKIES replaces. ESD is also in the process of documenting the lessons learned from the project.

Issues

- How can ESD modify the SKIES application to make it fully ADA accessible?

- How can ESD benefit from lessons learned from an interagency project of this nature and scope?

Recommendation

The Department of Information Services recommends that ESD continue with efforts to make the SKIES application ADA accessible. DIS also recommends that formal project oversight be discontinued for SKIES.